

## LBT to cover metal in beach with sand bags

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LONG BEACH TOWNSHIP — Commissioner Robert Palmer said this week the township plans to cover dangerous metal netting embedded in the beach in Holgate with heavy 10-foot nylon bags filled with sand.

Authorities laid the submarine net onto the beach to hold sand steady after the northeaster of 1962, according to Palmer.

Now, in Holgate, erosion brought on by storms sometimes reveals rusted metal. The storm Feb. 12 brought on the latest exposure. Palmer said it was the second time in six years erosion has revealed the netting.

The nets, which are made of steel hoops hooked together, were intended to keep submarines out of harbors during the world wars. They would be draped across harbors to catch enemy submarines and, ideally, entangle submarine propellers.

The sand bags will never move, so no one will ever step on metal net, Palmer said at the township's caucus meeting Wednesday.

Palmer said Commissioner Ralph Bayard had recommended covering the area in question with rocks, but Palmer said that would be too expensive. The nylon bags will cost about \$1,500 total, while covering the roughly 75-foot-by-100-foot area with rocks would cost thousands more, Palmer said. There is already a sign warning beachgoers not to walk in the area.

"First of all the (state) DEP didn't want us to put rocks out there," Palmer said. "They'd have to be set with a crane; we'd need dump trucks to get them out there."

Bill Hutson of Holgate, who has been urging Palmer for weeks to remove the netting and rebar, rather than cover them, said nylon bags wouldn't do the job.

"Sea bags are material and material will rip," Hutson said of the nylon bags. "You have to pull that stuff out."

Palmer said it is impossible to pull the metal out because it is too embedded in the ground.

Hutson said people have been hurt there in the past, and he fears the township could face millions in damages if someone were to hurt themselves there again.

Palmer, on Thursday, dismissed Hutson's claim that people have been hurt there.

"Nobody's been hurt," Palmer said. "I checked with the police, with the insurance company, with the clerk. There has never been one incident out there yet."

Hutson insisted, however, and said he had a "bombshell" that would prove Palmer wrong.

"Listen to me: we're going to prove him wrong," Hutson said. "There have been people hurt and we're going to prove him wrong."

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